

Update for Chippenham Area Board

Update from: Chippenham Vision

Date of meeting: Monday 14 November 2011

Headlines

Chippenham Vision is preparing a project tender to appoint consultants to prepare a Masterplan for the central area of the town. It is hoped that consultants will be appointed by January.

The draft development agreement for the Bath Road site has been finalised by Wiltshire Council and ING. It should be formally signed off by both parties within the next few days.

Public Sector Relocation

The Government Property Unit has confirmed there is no Government relocation programme in place. The Smith Review of 2010 has been rejected by the Government.

Previous government guidance on relocations has been rescinded. There have been no relocations from London in the last 12 months and none are expected over the life of the current Parliament owing to the massive contraction of Government operations; there is also no funding in place to support such relocations.

The main opportunity for Wiltshire is likely to be in providing accommodation for *local* operations of departments such as DWP, the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Prosecution Service that have been looking to cut their costs. HMRC have also been active in this regard for instance. The Vision will continue to seek to identify opportunities as they arise.

Projects

Langley Park – the final report on development options should be posted to the Vision website in the next few days and will be circulated to councillors.

In summary:

Appraisals on the development costs and potential profitability of various options and uses for the Langley Park site have been completed. These options only look at the current developable site and not the currently occupied employment land.

These options have been shared and discussed with Ashtenne (the site owners), GVA Grimley (their agents) and Hathaway retail park (adjacent to the site).

There has been some dispute over the calculations and cost assumptions made by Carter Jonas who have undertaken the work on behalf of the Council and Vision. These are currently being reviewed and a follow up meeting is taking place in September.

Initial findings are that the inclusion of a supermarket on the site would clearly be the most profitable development option. The investment from a supermarket may help to deliver less profitable elements on the site. The potential viability of options which do not include a supermarket will be discussed with Ashtenne.

To date plans for a supermarket on the site have been resisted due to the preference for developing the Bath Road Car Park site first.

Update for Chippenham Area Board

The Vision Masterplanning Sub-group views on the site are:

- Supermarket is not a preferable option.
 - Office development and a hotel would be the priority.
 - An extension of the Hathaway retail park would be acceptable as long as the blank rear facing the railway and station is changed to create a more welcoming façade.
 - Some leisure use would be acceptable but the preference would be for majority of leisure to be located more towards the town centre.
-

- The final draft of the Employment Land study is currently being reviewed by all parties. The final report should be published in the next few days.

Roger Tym & Partners were commissioned to carry out a study on demand for Employment Land across Wiltshire to complement the DTZ study of 2009 and to inform the Core Strategy. A workshop involving the local business community, commercial property agents, property developers and investors to discuss needs and future demand was held on the 8th September. Over 40 developers, agents and local businesses attended and provided some very valuable feedback to the study.

The majority of the employment sites in the County have been visited and assessed. A survey of local businesses is being carried out via SurveyMonkey, phone and face to face interviews.

The Vision is planning to commission work on a retail strategy for the town to identify in detail the key actions that will make the most difference. There is currently fairly extensive detail on the town's retail offer but less detail on how improvements can be achieved. A recent review of town centre vacancies has shown that Chippenham is actually performing fairly well. Details have been circulated to local councillors

Future Events/Dates for the diary

- Chippenham Vision Board Meeting 29th November
-